

SECRET/SPOKEINFORMATION

October 22, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: North Vietnamese Infiltration in The Past Few Months

DIA has provided the following details on the status of infiltration:

-- Overall infiltration last month and this month is a good deal higher than during the same period last year. The current magnitude indicates that Hanoi is engaged in a larger effort than last year, although the total number of infiltrators which will move south this dry season cannot yet be estimated.

-- During the past several months, until two weeks ago, most infiltration groups leaving North Vietnam have been destined for southern Laos, perhaps to protect the *trails* Thais.

-- Within the past two weeks, however, most of the groups leaving the north are being sent to COSVN for duty in southern South Vietnam or Cambodia. This new trend is likely to continue for the next several months.

-- Infiltration data for last year and this year is provided below.

	Total		For		For South Laos	
	I Infiltration		South Vietnam			
	1969	1970	1969	1970	1969	1970
JANUARY	20,400	14,200	19,200	13,600	1,200	600
FEBRUARY	25,000	11,700	25,000	11,700	-	-
MARCH	17,100	10,600	17,100	10,600	-	-
APRIL	2,300	3,000	2,300	2,300	-	700
MAY	1,200	3,800	1,100	3,100	100	700
JUNE	100	2,100	100	1,200	-	900
JULY	100	4,100	100	3,400	-	700
AUGUST	600	4,400	600	1,100	-	3,300
SEPTEMBER	600	11,000	600	800	-	10,200

DIA review completed.

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	<u>Total</u> <u>Infiltration</u>		<u>For</u> <u>South Vietnam</u>		<u>For South Laos</u>	
	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
OCTOBER	4,500	9,600*	4,400	7,400*	100	2,200*
NOVEMBER	7,800	?	7,800	?	-	?
DECEMBER	6,300	?	6,200	?	100	?
TOTALS	86,000	74,600	84,500	55,200	1,500	19,400

*So far

Comment. During the first three months of this year, infiltration was considerably lower than during the same period in 1969. This trend changed in April; since then the 1970 figures have been somewhat higher. They were much higher during the last two months. It seems clear that the change of government in Cambodia was the major factor behind the new trend. With the loss of Sihanoukville and the allied cross border operations, Hanoi decided it had to reinforce and expand its logistical network in the Laotian panhandle. Accordingly, nearly 20,000 men were moved into the panhandle -- almost all since April -- in comparison to only 1,500 during all of 1969. Included in this movement were three or four large combat units, and there is still some question whether these units will remain in southern Laos or move to another destination.

Recently, the influx into the panhandle has dropped off, suggesting that Hanoi has met its requirements there. Meanwhile, the regular dry season movement of infiltrators to South Vietnam has begun somewhat earlier and more substantially than last year. We agree with DIA that for the next several months most of the infiltration will be directed toward southern South Vietnam and Cambodia, and that it will be heavier than last year. How much more is difficult to say. Infiltration last year, according to intelligence estimates, did not replace losses, and Hanoi may feel that it cannot afford to let its military strength dwindle further. The Communists must now do more just to stand still. At the same time, Hanoi faces a larger manpower requirement in Cambodia. Whatever the rate of infiltration during the rest of the year, it appears that Hanoi has no immediate offensive in mind, but intends to concentrate on rebuilding its military strength in southern South Vietnam and Cambodia.

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